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Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with the statement by the President of the Security Council of 29 October 2008 (S/PRST/2008/39), in which the Secretary-General was requested to provide a report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) over the coming year, including information on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls in situations of which the Security Council is seized; on the obstacles and challenges to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and recommendations to address those issues.

2. In accordance with that request, the report focuses on actions to implement resolution 1325 (2000) since October 2008. Discussions of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls in the situations of which the Security Council has been seized cover both impacts originating in the past year and those that persist from previous conflict situations.

3. The report draws on information provided by entities of the United Nations system,[1] and reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on progress in situations of which the Security Council has been seized. The latter have been used extensively as they provide the most reliable and up-to-date information.

4. The introduction is contained in section I; section II summarizes the impact of armed conflict on women and girls in situations of which the Security Council was seized in the past year. Section III reviews implementation by the key actors identified in resolution 1325 (2000). Section IV discusses obstacles and challenges

[1] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Field Support, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Public Information, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, OSAGI, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, United Nations Democracy Fund, UNIFEM, UNDP, United Nations Forum on Forests, United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, UNHCR, UNIDO, UN-INSTRAW, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations Mine Action Service, United Nations Office for Project Services, UNFPA, UNRWA, United Nations System Staff College, World Bank, WFP.

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to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and section V presents conclusions and recommendations.

II. The impact of armed conflict on women and girls in situations of which the Security Council is seized

5. In adopting 1325 (2000), the Security Council called upon Member States, the United Nations system, parties to conflict and all other relevant actors to adopt a gender perspective that would take into account the special needs of women during conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. While much has been done in response to resolution 1325 (2000) in the nine years since its adoption, progress in implementation is limited, and armed conflict continues to have a devastating impact on women and girls in the areas covered by the present report.

6. The lawlessness endemic to conflict and post-conflict situations presents serious challenges to entire communities. For women and girls, these situations are particularly grave, frequently involving sexual and physical harm as well as social, economic and political disempowerment.

7. Although the evidence remains scattered and incomplete, in many of the situations of which the Security Council has been seized over the past year,[2] women have experienced a number of negative consequences, including physical and sexual violence. Women's access to basic social and humanitarian services such as education, especially for girls, has been drastically limited by armed conflict. Women continue to have limited opportunities to participate in peace processes.

8. An important impact of armed conflict on women and girls is the threat they face in their daily lives on account of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

A. Sexual violence

9. During the reporting period, sexual and gender-based violence remained one of the most pernicious consequences of armed conflict. It continued to be used as a weapon of war.

10. The level and magnitude of the brutality of sexual violence perpetrated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained of particular concern. There was a substantial increase in reported incidents in areas controlled by both the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), as well as in areas of deployment of the recently integrated Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC). Since the beginning of 2009, an alarming increase in sexual violence in North and South Kivu was noted. Nationwide, some 1,100 rapes were reported each month with an average of

[2] During the reporting period, the Security Council was seized of the following situations: the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, Cyprus, Western Sahara, Timor-Leste, Liberia, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Burundi, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Chad, the Sudan, the Central African Republic and Myanmar (S/2009/10).

36 daily. Victims were often young — between 10 and 17 years — and more than 10 per cent were children 10 years or younger (see S/2009/160).

11. The 2009 annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/63/785-S/2009/158 and Corr.1), reported the persistence of rape and other forms of sexual violence against girls in many situations of which the Council has been seized. In Somalia, for example, the report noted that rape and other sexual violence were committed by both members of armed forces and groups, as well as civilians. Children and women living in internally displaced persons settlements in Bossaso, Galkayo, Hargeisa and along the Afgoye corridor reported a large number of rapes.

12. In Burundi in 2008, 476 cases of rape against children were registered; 449 were girls and 27 were boys between the ages of 1 and 17 years. In Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Côte d' Ivoire and Chad, a high prevalence of rape and other forms of grave sexual violence were reported (see S/2009/18).

13. Cessation of hostilities does not guarantee an end to the perpetration of sexual violence. On the contrary, evidence shows that even after conflict has ended, high levels of sexual and gender-based violence tend to persist, creating long-term threats to security and to women's health, livelihoods, and their ability to participate in reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts.

14. The individual and societal cost of sexual and gender-based violence can be high and include unplanned pregnancies, infertility, infection with HIV/AIDS, stigmatization, ostracism and divisions within families and communities.

B. Security and access to social services for women and girls

15. Armed conflict often threatens the welfare and stability of women and their families and has had a severe impact on the provision of humanitarian aid. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) reported that in May 2009, Al-Shabaab forces took control of Jowhar town and looted the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) compound, deliberately destroying humanitarian supplies, assets and equipment. The destruction of the vaccine storage equipment, including thousands of doses of measles, polio and other vaccines intended for Somali children and women, left many without access to needed health interventions. In Chad and Georgia, a number of attacks targeted humanitarian personnel and assets. Those attacks damaged infrastructure and displaced health-care workers, having serious consequences for the provision of health services.

16. In Afghanistan, fear and insecurity have hampered efforts to increase the number of women health professionals staffing health facilities, thereby negatively affecting the delivery of child and maternal health services, as women are often reluctant to seek care from male health professionals. It is reported that fewer than 30 per cent of health facilities have a female health worker.

17. The destruction of hospitals, health-care facilities and the inability to access facilities that are still in place after armed conflict ends infringes on the health of all, with particularly negative consequences for women and children. Women's needs for reproductive health services in the context of armed conflict are particularly critical because of high levels of sexual and related violence and abuse.

18. In some situations before the Security Council, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, armed conflict has fuelled the emergence of extremist and fanatical groups that seek a restriction of women's freedoms. AMISOM reported that insurgent groups had forced girls into marriage, and in parts of south-central Somalia, extreme interpretations of sharia law by insurgent groups have led to allegations of grave violations of the right to life and physical integrity (see S/2009/373, para. 4). Summary executions, including beheadings, floggings, amputations, arbitrary arrests, restrictions on freedom of movement and violations of women's rights have been reported. In Afghanistan, the Shi'a Personal Status Law, signed by the President in July 2009, contains provisions legitimizing discriminatory practices against women.

19. Unfortunately, in these and other situations, there is limited access to justice, particularly for women. The capacity of the judiciary is often weak and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are often applied in a discriminatory manner, leaving women with limited access to justice to prosecute wartime abuses or pursue peacetime justice. The consequent de facto impunity is profoundly damaging to efforts to restore the rule of law and build confidence in post-conflict governance institutions.

C. Political participation

20. The adoption of a gender perspective in addressing armed conflict, including measures to ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the Constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary, has not been widely realized. This is the case even where open hostilities have subsided and opportunities for political activity and elections have emerged. In Afghanistan, for example, of the 4.5 million voters registered for the 2009 elections, only 38 per cent were women.

21. A persistent cause of concern is that women continue to be virtually absent from the peace table and to be severely underrepresented as third-party mediators or even as representatives of the United Nations in most conflict-affected countries. Women's activism at the grass roots rarely translates into official recognition during peace processes, where they are seldom included in formal negotiations. Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, a non-governmental organization which works with women affected by armed conflict, reports that a small group of women's rights activists from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, seeking to participate in peace talks, were excluded from the process. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has found that, since 1992, only 2.4 per cent of signatories to peace agreements were women and that no woman has ever been appointed as "chief mediator".[3]

[3] A UNIFEM review of a sample of 21 major peace processes since 1992 shows that only 2.4 per cent of signatories to this sample of peace agreements were women; that women's participation in negotiating delegations averaged 7.6 per cent of the 11 cases for which such information was available; and that no women have been appointed in chief or lead peace mediators in United Nations-sponsored peace talks. A positive recent exception is that of Graca Machel, who was one of the three mediators appointed by the African Union for the Kenya crisis in 2008 (UNIFEM, unpublished research, 2009).

22. The absence or curtailment of economic opportunities for women during armed conflict can further reduce their chances of political participation as they search for alternative sources of income. In particular, women trying to maintain or restart their livelihoods after armed conflict are often confronted with multiple challenges. A survey carried out by UNIFEM in Gaza following the war in 2009 found that 40 per cent of respondents could no longer reach their place of employment; 40 per cent had suffered damage and loss of assets; and more than 80 per cent did not have the funds to restart a business.

D. Education

23. The targeting of schools is often a deliberate tactic of war. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there was an increase in reports of attacks on schools and health facilities by militant forces. While the destruction of schools during armed conflict affects both boys and girls, girls are often particular targets. In Afghanistan, for example, Taliban militants attacked a group of girls en route to school by throwing acid on their faces. The militants were reportedly paid 100,000 Pakistani rupees for each girl they were able to burn (see A/63/785-S/2009/158 and Corr.1, para. 14).

24. Attacks on schools, violence against teachers and students, and the absence of school supplies and equipment have served to reduce substantially, if not eliminate altogether in some contexts, the opportunities for girls and women to access education. Limited access to education has an impact on women's empowerment and gender equality in the long term, even after armed conflict ends. This is of particular concern, as education remains one of the most effective strategies in empowering girls and women and transforming the discriminatory attitudes that increase the vulnerability and marginalization of women. Educated women are more likely to strengthen their position in the community and gain a more influential voice at the peace table.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

25. There has been an increasing trend towards partnership in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). As in previous years, actions to implement the resolution can be grouped under a few distinct categories. These are discussed below.

A. Training, capacity-development and awareness-raising

26. The United Nations system has paid particular attention to developing the capacity of Member States as well as its own to address the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

27. The World Food Programme (WFP) scaled up the integration of gender and protection into field operations and programming through training so that by the end of 2008, some 500 staff members and partners were trained in gender-related protection issues. The training also included prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence during food-distribution efforts. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations Integrated Training Service actively undertook activities to implement

its new training strategy, which included updating existing generic gender training modules to reflect guidance on the protection of women and girls from sexual violence, and updating the Senior Leadership Induction Programme. The United Nations System Staff College, through its Peace and Security Programme, further enhanced its Conflict Prevention training package which can be customized to the needs of different United Nations country teams. The training package now encompasses an extensive module on "Gender analysis and conflict prevention". In support of the Government's efforts to empower Iraqi women at home and in the workplace, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a workshop with the Government of Iraq on strategies to counter community-based violence against women.

28. In 2009, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations undertook monitoring visits to Timor-Leste, Darfur (the Sudan), Chad, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assess the implementation of its Policy Directive on Gender Equality in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and to support development of mission-wide action plans for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

29. In Burundi, where sexual violence has been an issue of serious concern, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) partnered with UNIFEM and other stakeholders to provide training to elected female representatives at the communal, provincial and national levels.

30. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) focused on sensitizing national and international partners to the Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women, especially in the context of an upsurge in sexual violence in the country. UNOCI also continued to strengthen the capacity of local women's groups to encourage their participation in the electoral process and provided technical and financial support in that regard. It also continued to raise awareness among its personnel and promoted gender-mainstreaming by, inter alia, appointing a women's focal point, in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

31. With the aim of collecting good practices and lessons learned in implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) globally, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), International Alert and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) collaborated to prepare a publication on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level. Information was collected through interviews with implementing government institutions. A global virtual discussion was held in December 2008 and a comprehensive desk and literature review was undertaken.

32. INSTRAW held two virtual dialogues on women and peace and security. The first, entitled "Filling the gaps: a virtual discussion on gender, peace and security research", was held in October 2008. The discussion brought together academics and practitioners from different world regions to assess current debates in gender, peace and security research, exchange information, identify research gaps and build a platform for further collaboration. The second virtual discussion, entitled "Planning for action: good practices on implementing resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level", was held in November 2008. The dialogue highlighted existing efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and strengthened awareness about good practices in the preparation of national action plans.

33. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) Gender Office provided training and technical support for members of the National Steering Committee for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNIFEM and OSAGI also intensified collaborative efforts to build national capacities for the development of national, regional and global sets of indicators and data-gathering systems to monitor the implementation of the resolution. To enhance national capacities, UNDP supported Iraq, the Sudan and the occupied Palestinian territories with dedicated short-term gender expertise. Full-time senior gender advisers are being deployed to 10 countries — Burundi, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Southern Sudan and Timor-Leste. UNDP also partnered with other United Nations entities to support the development and implementation of national action plans.

34. UNFPA has trained and supported police units in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Somalia, with emphasis on sensitivity to the particular needs of women and children. UNFPA also engaged community groups to educate peers on the existence of these special police units.

B. Protection of women against the threat of mines

35. A number of activities have been undertaken to ensure the protection of women during armed conflict, especially in the context of post-war instability and the threat of mines. The United Nations Mine Action Service increased its efforts to ensure that mine action programmes have an equal impact on women, men, boys and girls and that women, men, boys and girls enjoy equal access to mine action as practitioners and beneficiaries. The reporting period saw a decrease of the number of casualties, in part owing to an increase in women's participation in mine-risk education activities. Data from Lebanon and the Sudan indicate that the number of casualties continues to decline.

36. Even more important is the transformation in women's views about their roles. A study entitled "Attitudes towards mine action: an Afghan woman's perspective" revealed that 64 per cent of women believe that they should participate, assist and contribute to mine action activities. The study indicated the importance of gender-sensitive research and the full inclusion of women in consultations to ensure a full understanding of mine action issues.

37. The United Nations Mine Action Team is supporting field-led initiatives on national training and building a pilot gender community of practice. A workshop on gender entitled "Perspectives from the Asia field programmes" was held in Geneva in March 2009, gathering mine action national directors and United Nations advisers from Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand and knowledge-management and gender specialists. Participants in the workshop expressed strong support for a holistic and coherent system-wide approach to mainstreaming gender in national mine action plans with the view to improving the effective delivery of gender-sensitive programmes on the ground.

C. Operational support and service delivery

38. Whereas much has been achieved in the area of training and capacity development, progress in terms of direct support to programmes and services has been limited.

39. In response to the increase in gender-based violence in Nepal, two joint programmes involving UNICEF, UNIFEM and UNFPA were started during the reporting period. The first addresses gender-based violence at the district level by providing new services for women, men and children in four districts using a $1.3 million grant provided by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The second programme, in which the World Health Organization (WHO) is also involved, delivers essential reproductive health care, education and psychosocial counselling to women and girls affected by conflict. This is funded by a $1.1 million grant from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

40. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) addressed protection and support to women and girls by ensuring the provision of sanitary materials to women and girls of reproductive age receiving humanitarian assistance from the organization. In 2008, 35 operations reported the distribution of sanitary materials at a cost of about $1.5 million. The Maka Pads project in Uganda, which was developed to produce sanitary materials using natural and local material, not only meets at least half of the needs of sanitary materials of refugee women in Uganda, but also provides employment for refugee women. UNHCR is committed to replicating such livelihood projects in other locations.

41. UNICEF supports gender-based violence programming efforts in approximately 15 countries affected by conflict or civil unrest or natural disaster. It has led or co-led gender-based violence assessments in emergency situations and also supported inter-agency work on the development of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Standard Operating Procedures for gender-based violence programming in emergencies. In the first half of 2009, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF partners enabled 9,347 survivors of sexual violence to receive psychosocial support and 7,153 survivors to receive medical care.

D. Development of legislation and frameworks

42. Improving the legislative framework for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is essential to its success. A number of activities by UNDP and other partners have supported this area of implementation. Since 2008, UNDP has been implementing its Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations 2008-2011, which targets 20 conflict and post-conflict countries with support in developing comprehensive and integrated rule of law programmes. A major component of these programmes is access to justice and security for women and girls, especially victims of sexual violence. To this end, UNDP has designed and supported multi-year rule of law programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Timor-Leste, which have a strong focus on security and access to justice for women and girls.

43. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a project has been developed focusing on North and South Kivu to ensure that women and girls who are survivors of sexual violence have access to justice and legal aid, while also empowering judiciary and security institutions to ascertain accountability, prevent sexual violence and combat impunity. In addition, a project initiation plan was launched which aims to enhance the programmatic approach of UNDP to strengthen women's security and access to justice by placing a senior gender adviser in the country office and by defining programmatic entry points to address gender-based violence. In the Sudan, the focus is on providing support to formal and informal justice systems, ensuring that survivors are supported in seeking legal redress through the legal aid centres and the legal aid network, and raising awareness among local communities and tribal leaders. Ongoing initiatives focus on taking simple but critical messages directly to the people.

44. BINUB supported the establishment of a women's parliamentary caucus. In October 2008, the caucus held its constituent assembly during which its members committed to playing a larger role in addressing peace consolidation. They drafted an action plan on legislative matters of interest to women in both houses of Parliament.

45. Together with UNICEF, BINUB supported the Government of Burundi in the elaboration of a draft law on violence against women. It also continues to participate in monitoring the implementation of the national strategy to combat sexual violence and abuse against women and children.

46. In response to Security Council resolution 1794 (2007), the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict supported the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy on combating sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was finalized and presented to the Government in April 2009. The Government endorsed the strategy and affirmed its full commitment to implementation. This provides a foundation for further work to address the serious challenge posed by sexual violence in the country.

47. Displaced women and girls often encounter obstacles in obtaining government-issued documentation in their own name. To provide protection to women and girls and reduce their exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, UNHCR individual refugee registration is under way. The system allows the consistent documentation of women, ensuring their individual registration.

E. Discussions within intergovernmental and treaty bodies

48. An important aspect of strengthening the United Nations system to fully implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is ensuring that due attention is given to the resolution in discussions within relevant intergovernmental bodies. Progress has been made in incorporating the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the work of intergovernmental and treaty bodies of the United Nations system. The Commission on the Status of Women consistently pays attention to women, peace and security issues. Evaluating progress in the implementation of the 2006 agreed conclusions on "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels" at its fifty-third session in March 2009, the Commission called for increased support for women's full and equal participation and representation at all decision-making levels and in all peace

processes, including post-conflict peacebuilding, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation. At its forty-third session, held in January 2009, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reiterated its call on States to take all necessary measures to ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in reconstruction and socio-economic development, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), and in conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. The Committee also urged States parties to continue to ensure appropriate protection, support and equal access to justice for women victims of sexual violence during armed conflicts.

F. Development of national action plans

49. Much has been achieved in the development of national action plans. The development of these plans has involved cooperation and collaboration among various partners, including United Nations entities. The Gender Office in MONUC, in collaboration with UNDP, the Ministry of Gender, women's networks and other sections of MONUC, organized workshops and sponsored research to inform development of a national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). UNFPA worked closely with Government counterparts in Afghanistan and Uganda to develop their plans. Chile passed its national action plan in August 2009. Nepal and Sierra Leone are developing their national action plans. During the reporting period, national action plans were developed by Uganda and Liberia, bringing the total number of countries with national action plans to 16 — Austria, Belgium, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Liberia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

50. The development of Liberia's national action plan is an example worthy of emulation. It brought Government, United Nations entities and civil society together in a multi-stakeholder approach. Beginning in August 2008, INSTRAW and the Office of the Gender Adviser of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, with the support of UNFPA and UNDP country offices, established an inter-agency team to support the Ministry of Gender and Development during preparation of the national action plan. A steering committee of representatives from different governmental institutions, United Nations entities and civil society organizations was established to guide the drafting of the plan, which was also negotiated on an ongoing basis with community chiefs and organizations outside Monrovia. INSTRAW supported this process through a women, peace and security assessment geared at capacity-development initiatives with Government and civil society stakeholders and awareness-raising activities, as well as the development of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to accompany the national action plan and its implementation.

G. Women's participation in decision-making and in peace processes

51. A number of initiatives were taken by United Nations entities to increase the participation of women in elections. For instance, the United Nations Office for Project Services Iraq Operations Centre implemented an electoral programme in partnership with the Independent High Electoral Commission. Emphasis was placed

on the importance of women participating in the electoral process in order to create a multiplier effect throughout different communities. Working through civil society organizations, awareness was raised at the grass-roots level by targeting voters directly. As a result of this initiative, more than a quarter million potential voters were reached, of which 41 per cent were women. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) provided assistance to the platform for women's political participation, named "G23", to help it to organize a general assembly for its official registration and the launching of its plan of action for 2009. In Guinea-Bissau, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) supported the Women's Political Platform to implement activities to foster women's participation freely and fairly in the elections.

52. Sometimes, enhancing electoral participation serves as a strategic opportunity to enhance women's participation in post-conflict nation-building and creates a gender-responsive reconstruction agenda at the local level. In Timor-Leste, the United Nations Democracy Fund, UNIFEM and Redefeto Timor-Leste used the village council elections held in the first quarter of 2009 to enhance the quantity and quality of women's representation through advocacy for gender responsive electoral law, capacity-building support to potential candidates and sensitization activities for voters, as well as promotion of a gender-responsive policy platform in campaigns. Following the elections, the project supported a gender responsive local development agenda by improving of knowledge and skills of elected women councillors.

53. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUC conducted research on the situation of women in the National Police Force. A compendium of the challenges confronting women in the police has been developed based on the research findings. The Gender Office is providing technical support to the development of training and refresher modules for the National Police Force, tailored to the resolution of challenges within the security sector reform framework. The MONUC Gender Office is also supporting the National Police Force at the national and provincial levels in integrating a gender-perspective in the draft law, which reorganizes the National Police Force and advocates for 30 per cent of places being reserved for women.

54. In Burundi, BINUB adopted a creative and inclusive approach to support the implementation of the Declaration of 4 December 2008 and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. BINUB, having identified the specific needs of male and female ex-combatants, developed: inclusive eligibility criteria to provide male and female ex-combatants with equal opportunities to benefit from the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; an alternative programme for the reintegration of 1,000 women associated with the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL); and an alternative programme to support the women's wing of FNL as a political party.

55. The BINUB initiative sought to ensure that gaps in the peace agreement that resulted in women's exclusion from the rehabilitation process was successfully addressed. The BINUB initiative is a good practice example in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

56. The Secretary-General has responded to the call in resolution 1325 (2000) to increase the number of women in senior positions within the United Nations,

especially in peacekeeping operations. As of July 2009, there are three women serving as Head of Mission (Nepal, Liberia and the Central African Republic) and six serving as Deputy to the Head of Mission (Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Liberia and the Sudan). In the Department of Peacekeeping Operations missions alone, in July 2009, there were five women serving at the levels of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General and over 20 at the level of Directors at the D-2 and D-1 levels. The overall percentage of women performing key leadership functions in the field missions has increased from 13 per cent in July 2007 to 16 per cent in 2009. Efforts are ongoing to further energize and sustain this positive trend through well-assessed strategic and targeted partnerships and outreach initiatives.

H. Advocacy and overall monitoring of progress

57. In the absence of a clear monitoring mechanism for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council has continued to play a strong advocacy role. For example, following consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and support activities (S/2009/189), the Council noted with concern the very low numbers of women in formal roles in mediation processes and stressed the need to ensure that women are appropriately appointed at decision-making levels, as high-level mediators, in line with resolution 1325 (2000). It also reiterated its call to the Secretary-General and heads of regional and subregional organizations to take appropriate measures to that end (see S/PRST/2009/8). The Security Council has also stressed the importance of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) when considering several of the situations of which it is seized. In its resolution 1868 (2009) on Afghanistan, for example, the Council strongly condemned continuing forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, in particular violence aimed at preventing girls from attending school and requested the Secretary-General to continue to include in his reports to the Council, relevant information of the process of integration of women into the country's political, economic and social life. In its resolution 1863 (2009) on Somalia, the Council reaffirmed resolution 1325 (2000) and stressed the responsibility of all parties and armed groups to take appropriate steps to protect the civilian population, consistent with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, in particular by avoiding indiscriminate or excessive use of force in populated areas.

58. Concerning Côte d'Ivoire, the Security Council noted the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security and to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. In its resolution 1867 (2009), the Council welcomed the cooperation of the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) with other United Nations partners to support the Government's efforts to develop a national gender equality policy and strategy.

59. In June 2009, an Arria formula briefing for Security Council members, representatives of the United Nations Secretariat and representatives from non-governmental organizations, was organized by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations. At the briefing, conclusions from an earlier high-level two-day United Nations Colloquium, highlighting the need for the Security Council's sustained engagement on the issue of sexual violence in United

Nations peacemaking and mediation efforts, were discussed, as well as recommendations for mediators in the area of pre-ceasefire agreements, ceasefires, security and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, justice and reparations. The Arria formula briefing recommended the allocation of specific resources and capacities within the United Nations system to end impunity for conflict-related sexual violence and to address women's protection within security sector and justice reform, as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. While the Council therefore provided a high-level forum for the discussion of these issues, the absence of a formal monitoring mechanism limited the flow of information to the Council on areas of implementation requiring special attention. This and other challenges and obstacles are discussed in the next section.

IV. Obstacles and challenges to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding

60. Despite progress, obstacles to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding remain. Some emanate from the very nature of armed conflict which creates social, economic and political instability and disrupts existing social networks, infrastructure and economic and social activities. Others relate to the breadth of resolution 1325 (2000), which requires novelty and creativity to address these challenges. Yet others arise from a weak implementation framework and the absence of clear targets and reliable data.

61. Since armed conflict disrupts the social and economic fabric of society, when peace returns, people, especially women, focus first on trying to regain the equilibrium they had before. This leaves little room for engagement in activities that they or society may consider to be outside the purview of women. In particular, the compelling need to re-establish their livelihoods, leaves women with little opportunity to participate in political or peacebuilding processes.

62. The threat of post-conflict violence remains one of the most persistent obstacles to women's full and equal participation in post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. The gender-based violence that women experience in early recovery situations is exacerbated by the fact that women's security is rarely a priority in efforts to reform, rebuild or rehabilitate security and justice systems. As was found in a UNIFEM study of post-conflict planning and fund allocation in seven post-conflict situations,[4] emergency and post-conflict investments seldom analyse women's needs or earmark spending for addressing women's security needs and preventing gender-based violence.

63. The absence of efficient judiciary and security institutions to ensure accountability, prevent violence and combat impunity are pressing challenges. Threats of violence and abuse often remain long after armed conflict ceases, intimidating women and preventing them from engaging fully in rebuilding their societies for a peaceful future. The formal justice system often provides no recourse and may be inaccessible for many women.

[4] UNIFEM, "Funding for women's needs within post-conflict needs assessments", 2009, mimeo.

64. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI reported that efforts to prevent and address impunity and violence had made limited progress because of delays in the effective redeployment of judicial services. UNOCI also noted that in many instances, the families of victims of sexual violence had withdrawn complaints and opted for extrajudicial settlement. Fees for medical certification often prevented victims from obtaining legal evidence (S/2009/344, para. 34).

65. Cultural challenges to women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding persist. Traditional views about the roles of women in society, stigmatization and discrimination hamper progress. Women who have had children as a result of their relations with combatants, women and girls who have been victims of sexual and gender-based violence and women who have been rejected by their husbands after demobilization often find themselves ostracized and have little or no access to opportunities for political participation.

66. Socio-economic factors, including low literacy rates, poverty and a preoccupation with settling their households after active conflict has ended, are also likely to keep many women outside of decision-making processes.

67. The dearth of information on the gender dimensions of peacekeeping efforts is a critical challenge. Although an increasing number of reports of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping missions are now specifically addressing the issues of gender mainstreaming, there is still a need for consistent and holistic reporting on women, peace and security. The situation of women or girls is not referenced in some of these reports, while in other cases the focus is limited to sexual violence or the extent to which women are represented among staff of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

68. Many existing challenges reflect the fact that women continue to be considered as victims and not as key partners in addressing and resolving situations of armed conflict. Efforts to address the gender dimensions of armed conflict thus focus heavily on protection and treatment of women victims — as they must — but almost to the exclusion of actions to empower them.

69. There is therefore a pressing need for those who negotiate peace agreements to focus on gender considerations as an integral part of the process rather than as an add-on. Women and girls associated with armed groups must benefit from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the same way that men and boys do.

70. Given the important role that the United Nations has in implementing resolution 1325 (2000), the small number of women in senior positions in the Organization, particularly in peacekeeping missions, sets a poor example. In 60 years of United Nations peacekeeping — from 1948 to 2008 — only seven women have ever held the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Especially in the context of peacekeeping missions, the paucity of women at senior levels weakens the ability and clout of the United Nations to advocate effectively for change at national levels.

71. A fundamental obstacle to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding is the novelty of the approach of resolution 1325 (2000) and its departure from the "traditional approach" to brokering peace which only provides opportunities to direct parties to the dispute. To request that apparent non-participants be engaged in preventing and resolving the

conflict may seem foreign to both those who broker peace and those for whom the peace is intended.

72. Given the novelty and comprehensiveness of resolution 1325 (2000), the absence of a reporting and monitoring mechanism, akin to that established to monitor the implementation of resolution 1612 (2005) on children in armed conflict, has become a major handicap. Continuous feedback on progress in implementing the resolution is lacking, and no systematic sharing of best practices and approaches exists.

73. In the context of existing implementation gaps, negotiation of peace agreements and planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration continue to take place with little regard to resolution 1325 (2000). Cessation of hostilities, recovering weapons and integrating combatants, mainly male, into re-established national security institutions preoccupy negotiators with scant attention paid to issues of gender equality.

74. As a result, women remain outside most peace processes. A few have been included in police forces and a number have benefited from training, however, the core objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) remain out of reach in many of the situations of which the Security Council has been seized.

75. A major obstacle to the engagement of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding is the lack of cooperation on the part of parties to armed conflict. Information on actions taken in the past year by parties to armed conflict is extremely limited. However, it is apparent that this remains a very weak area of implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Armed militia continue to disregard international law applicable to the protection of women and girls. Armed groups continue to perpetuate rape and other forms of sexual violence with impunity, and their violence and intimidation keep women away from peace processes.

76. Similar to the findings of the evaluation of a decade of progress with the implementation of the presidential statement expressing grave concern at the growing civilian toll of conflict (S/PRST/1999/6), it can be concluded that there are "persistent and sometimes appalling levels of human suffering owing to the fundamental failure of parties to conflict to fully respect and ensure respect for their obligations" (S/2009/277, para. 4). This failure in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), demands a reinvigorated commitment by the Council, Member States and the United Nations system to the protection of civilians and to the promotion of respect for the principles of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

77. Armed conflict has a disproportionate impact on women and girls even though most are not directly engaged in combat. The significance of resolution 1325 (2000) lies in the way it links the impact of war and conflict on women on the one hand, and promotes their participation in various peace and security processes such as in peace negotiations, constitutional and electoral reforms and reconstruction and reintegration on the other.

78. United Nations entities and Member States have made progress in some areas of implementation of the resolution over the past year, with major strides in training and capacity development and provision of support for developing national action plans. Achievements have occurred in training women in leadership, and in carrying out civic and electoral responsibilities, with the consequence of increasing the number of women in public office in some post-conflict contexts. Close collaboration is developing between the United Nations system, Member States and civil society organizations in implementing the resolution.

79. A number of implementation difficulties persist, including how to reverse the extent of sexual violence. Specific and concrete interventions are needed to address sexual violence, which continues to assail women and girls virtually everywhere armed conflict has occurred. Legislation to end impunity, and reform designed to support greater participation of women in all peace, humanitarian and reconstruction processes are needed.

80. The development of national action plans has seen much progress in the past year. The process has involved considerable collaboration across United Nations entities and Member States, with some best practice examples emerging that can guide the development of future action plans.

81. The incorporation of gender perspectives into peace processes is emerging, but slowly. Most attention continues to focus on women as victims. Women as active participants in the peace processes remain marginal. What is now required is more attention to programmes that are directed at reversing current trends, including the blatant disregard of international law and international humanitarian law by parties to armed conflict. This is one area which could be addressed by national action plans. Appropriate tools and indicators will be needed to monitor their implementation.

82. There is also an urgent need for a dedicated monitoring mechanism and a clear, continuous and comprehensive system to review progress and feedback of lessons learned from the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The Council would enhance enormously the implementation of the resolution were it to establish such a mechanism.

83. The upcoming tenth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution in September 2010 provides a new opportunity for all major stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment and strengthen efforts to fully implement resolution 1325 (2000) to achieve real and lasting changes in the lives of women and girls.

Proposed specific actions

84. **In light of the above, the following specific actions are proposed:**

(a) The Security Council should reiterate its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000);

(b) **Member States** must not only condemn violations of the rights of women and girls during armed conflict but also take swift action in prosecuting those who commit gender-based violence in the context of armed conflict, and, where necessary and appropriate, use all existing provisions under international law,

international humanitarian law and international criminal law to address these crimes;

(c) **Member States** should ensure the representation of women at all decision-making levels in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000). In this connection, resources and other logistical support must be provided to ensure that women have access to training and capacity-development tools;

(d) In view of the dearth of data, which makes evaluation of progress difficult, **all actors involved in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding** must make concerted efforts to collect data on all aspects of resolution 1325 (2000);

(e) **United Nations entities** must expand their activities related to the delivery of services, such as those related to health care, education and capacity-building, at the country level, including through enhanced collaboration within the United Nations system, with civil society organizations and others at the community level;

(f) The **Security Council** should vigorously pursue a strategy to ensure an increase in women's participation in all peace processes, particularly in negotiation and mediation, as well as in post-conflict governance and reconstruction, including an increase in the number of women Special Representatives of the Secretary-General as well as in peacekeeping missions, as military, police and civilian members;

(g) The **Security Council** should ensure that peace agreements and humanitarian action programmes address the specific needs and concerns of women and girls;

(h) The **Security Council** should require that all country reports to the Security Council on situations of which the Security Council is seized provide specific information on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, including, where possible, data disaggregated by sex and age;

(i) **United Nations entities** should also intensify efforts at the national level to collect appropriate data and to develop locally appropriate indicators to measure progress and identify gaps in the implementation of the resolution. They should also assist Governments in recording their best practices in order to develop institutional capacities for future use;

(j) **Governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders** should work to increase human and financial resources for mainstreaming a gender perspective in peace and security processes. Special attention must be given to increasing resources for activities targeted at women and girls to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women at the local, national, regional and international levels;

(k) It is especially important that all **United Nations entities**, particularly those with key responsibilities in the area of women and peace and security, continue to give their unwavering support to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), including by contributing relevant lessons to reports to the Council;

(l) Intensive efforts are required to strengthen coherence and coordination efforts both within the **United Nations system and with Member States** and establish effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms for the implementation of the resolution at the global, regional and national levels. The Security Council should establish this monitoring mechanism as a matter of urgency;

(m) **The Security Council** should use the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) to organize a high-level ministerial event to direct the attention of the international community towards the full implementation of the resolution and to generate renewed and revitalized international momentum for concerted action.